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McManus legislation would allow early DNA collection from certain offenders

LANSING – Legislation introduced Wednesday in the Michigan Senate would allow for earlier collection of DNA samples from certain violent and sexual offenders, announced Sen. Michelle McManus, sponsor of the bill.

“DNA technology is increasingly vital to ensuring accuracy and fairness in the criminal justice system,” said McManus, R-Lake Leelanau. “This bill will help law enforcement by giving them new tools to solve previously ‘cold’ cases and keep our streets safer from violent repeat offenders.”

Senate Bill 575 would allow law enforcement agencies to collect DNA samples from offenders after their arraignment. Collecting DNA samples earlier would give law enforcement agencies time to conduct a thorough investigation to determine if an offender’s DNA sample matches any collected from the scenes of unsolved crimes before that individual reenters society.

Under current law, DNA samples are taken from violent felons after they are convicted. Often by the time the sample is tested for a possible match to a previously unsolved crime the individual has been released.

DNA can be used to identify criminals with incredible accuracy when biological evidence exists. By the same token, DNA can be used to clear suspects and exonerate persons mistakenly accused or convicted of crimes.

Several states, including Louisiana, Texas and Virginia, already allow early DNA collection.

SB 575 has been referred to the Senate Judiciary Committee.

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